

CPYRGHT

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Presidential Stature

Gen. Walter Bedell Smith recovered his fumble about as effectively as could have been expected. His telephone conversation with General Eisenhower brought assurances that Ike would not exploit for political purposes General Smith's statement that he believes Communists have infiltrated into the Central Intelligence Agency which he heads. According to General Smith's memorandum to the President, Ike accepted his (Smith's) explanation that he knew of no Communists in CIA but assumed for the purpose of maintaining vigilance that an occasional spy may slip through the finest loyalty net. Of course, Governor Stevenson was delighted to agree that General Smith's indiscretion should not be made a political issue.

It is not to be supposed that General Eisenhower can control all Republican campaigners, but he has taken a statesmanlike attitude in trying to shield the CIA from becoming a political football. The effect of his influence was quickly noted in the changed attitude of Arthur E. Summerfield, chairman of the Republican National Committee. The national interest can best be served by dropping the incident completely. That certainly is General Eisenhower's wish. For he has a special understanding of the need to let the CIA do its work without political badgering or loss of public confidence. His willingness to avoid exploiting a sensational *faux pas* that might have proved politically advantageous, without boasting about his patriotism, is a mark of presidential stature.